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RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
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SUBJECT: NINEWA PRT: PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT REACHES OUT TO ITS
CONSTITUENTS

SUMMARY

¶1. In an effort to bring the provincial government into closer contact with district constituents, PRT Ninewa and MNF-N have provided logistical support for the Ninewa provincial council to conduct a series of outreach events throughout Ninewa province. The provincial leadership held town meetings in Sinjar, Quyarrah, Tal Afar, Makhmour and Telkaif during April and May. Turnout has been high, with crowds of approximately 130 persons at each event. The impetus for the outreach events came from a meeting provincial government officials had with MNF-N and the PRT in March, where Governor Duraid Kashmoula said he and his colleagues wanted to visit more remote parts of the province but did not have the means to do so. The "town hall"-style meetings allowed mayors, tribal leaders, and city and district councils a chance to meet provincial officials from Mosul and discuss issues affecting their areas and how the provincial government could help. Overall, provincial government and PRT representatives believe the events have been a rousing success: they have focused provincial and district leaders alike on concrete tasks and challenges. End Summary.

DISTRICT OUTREACH EVENTS DEEMED A SUCCESS

¶2. Provincial government district outreach events were open to the public. Topics of discussion ranged from national issues, such as security and stability, to those affecting local officials and their constituents, such as aid to farmers. Inevitably, security was the headline issue, with district officials and constituents expressing concern about terrorism and the need for better protection from Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). Services (especially clean water, garbage collection, and electricity) were also high priorities, with agricultural areas concerned about having enough fuel, for instance, to do their work. Local issues were also discussed, such as the need for a sewage system in Telkaif District. Provincial Council Chair Salem Hajj Issa and Vice Governor Khasro Goran attended all outreach events. Governor Duraid Kashmoula attended the events up to May 14 when he left Iraq for hip surgery in Turkey. Provincial leaders spoke effectively about the need to address issues and to work for improvement of all segments of society in Ninewa regardless of religious or ethnic background.

COMMENT

13. The willingness of provincial officials to engage in outreach events in areas outside Mosul indicates a growing awareness of their need to have a more responsive and transparent government if they want to be considered legitimate by the citizens of Ninewa. Given the Kurdish domination of the provincial government (the Governor, Vice Governor, Council Speaker and 31 of 41 Council members represent the Kurdish list) there is a natural skepticism among the population that the interests of Shias, Sunnis, Christians and other minorities are not of concern to the government. The effort of the government leaders to reach out to these groups and to listen to their concerns is a first step toward overcoming this skepticism and demonstrating that the provincial government is genuinely concerned about all the residents of the province no matter their religion, tribe or ethnic group.

MUNTER